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Kuma

might take them more or less for granted, that is to say, as Professor Brown puts it, "he does not of necessity consciously and directly realise that value. He is made to realise it indirectly, through the belief impressed upon him by tradition, that the thing in question affords protection against danger."* And, further, I would stress, that this same protective thing is dangerous apart from the full social life. It is not claimed that the leaders of the tribe have wittingly used these means to make the individuals in it appreciate the blessings they have, but an analysis of primitive ceremonial enables us to conclude that this is the psychological basis of many of the customs, and that they are the means used to maintain the cohesion of the tribe, by making its members realise that in society they owe the things of value they have, so that they are willing to keep up the old customs and traditions on which it is believed the well-being of the whole depends. "So that the protective uses of such things," says Professor Brown, "are really rites or ceremonies by means of which the individual is made to realise (1) his own dependence on the society and its possessions, and (2) the social value of the things in question."† Things which are useful to the community, important for its existence, come to partake, as it were, of the strength of the community, and by this power they afford protection to its members.

Let us first consider the protective power of water. Among the Topnaars of Walvis Bay and the Zwartboys of Franzfontein, and probably among all the Namas, cold water is, or was formerly, thrown on the grave of a person newly buried, and often the men return again the next day to throw more water on the grave. The reason given me was that it hardened the grave, so that no wild beasts could dig there, but the reason given to Theophilus Hahn in the seventies of last century was that it "cooled the soul of the departed."‡ Further, when the people return from the grave to the kraal, all the inmates, except the bereaved family and the near relatives, who must on no account touch water, wash their hands in cold water, and cold water is sprinkled on the place in the hut where the body was lying before it was taken to be buried. In itself the washing of the hands with water might not be significant, especially as each person is obliged by custom to pick up handfuls of earth and throw them into the grave, and one might suppose that they were merely washing the dust off, but we have noted that the near relatives do not touch the water, and, further, the reason given for the washing on the part of the other inmates is that they would get sick if they did not do so. The cold water sprinkled in the hut also prevents the sickness that was there from spreading.

Now, one of the great dreads of the Namas is the /Hei /Khoa, the ghosts which hover over the graves, or come from them, and who formerly were thought to cause most of the sickness among

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* *Ibid.*, p. 364.
† *Ibid.*, p. 365.
‡ Vedder, *The Supreme Being of the Khoi Khoin*, T. Hahn, p. 115.

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Nama

753 the Namas, either themselves, or through the !Oáti Aogu, the
•774 medicine men. Nowadays, there are great differences among the
761 people with regard to the dread of the /Hoï /Nûn, some people not fearing to go even to the grave, whereas others would on no account go near one, especially after sunset. If one asks a Nama why he is afraid of the grave, he answers it is because of the thing that is in there, the skeleton, which he says is a fearsome thing. No Nama will touch a dead man's bones, if he can help it, and on the Orange River, when I found a skeleton on the sand dunes and picked it up, my native guide told me the /Hoï /Nûn would surely follow us, did they not know I was not afraid of them. When people are alone the /Hoï /Nûn come chasing them, and I have had many an instance given me of persons arriving home utterly worn out and exhausted after such a chase, who almost always died shortly afterwards. In Windhoek among the Zwartboys I found the /Hoï /Nûn were very much dreaded, and I was told of very many cases where they had appeared to the people during the influenza epidemic, when they had tried to drag their victims off to the grave, that is, to kill them. Further, old Christian, a Bondelswart, told me that often when a man has died he appears to a member of the family in sleep. When the sleeper wakes he will say, "/Gâo oai, !uri ǂkûp /gûiba ta go mu" (no flesh, a white bone alone I saw). The old people then say that the person who has died has come to fetch another of them; one of the family will die.* Relatives, then, especially near relatives, are in much greater danger than other people. They are likely to sicken and die, and it is from the /Hoï /Nûn that this sickness and danger are thought to come. These relatives must go through a much longer process of purification which will be mentioned later on,* but the ordinary inmates, as we have seen, protect themselves immediately by the use of cold water.
§23 The next instance of the protective use of water will make the
§24 first one clearer. When a whirlwind, a Sarin, comes swirling
[153] through a kraal and passes by a hut, the inmates rush inside, get cold water, and throw it in the path of the wind. Did they not take this precaution someone would surely die. I have exact statements that this is so among the Topnaars, the Zwartboys, the Rooi Natie, three of the aboriginal tribes of Great Namaqualand. This is the description that old /Kabib, the Topnaar, gave me. "In the old days when a whirlwind came by, the people would shout, 'Phu—o, lê re, taie hâ hâ kun !kun !kun phu—o' (Phu—o, please depart, what do you seek here, go, go, go, phu—o) and cold water would be quickly fetched and sprinkled in the path." This expression, phu—o, is used only by the Topnaars, so far as I know, among the Namas, and the other tribes say the Topnaars got it from the Klip Kafirs or Hau Khoin. Of its exact significance when used by the Klip Kafirs I have at present no information, but by the Topnaars it is often used when making a solemn address of this kind.

* See p. 324.